



Tapu!tea

...ina ia manino le folauga.

Wednesday
September 5,
2007

OFFICIAL AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT WEEKLY NEWSLETTER Vol. II, No. 16

In This Issue:

*Lee Auditorium
reopens after facelift*
pg. 2

*Acting Gov. Ipolasi
issues statement on
Uiagalelei's case* ..pg. 2

*DHSS Director hopeful
of WIC/ASNAP status*
pg. 3

*Governor Togiola
elected President of
PBDC* pg. 4

*Update of more Toys
Made in China Recall*
pg. 5

*Manu'a Kids get Free
Dental checkups* pg. 6

*Governor Togiola
declares war on global
warming* Pg. 6

*Gov. Togiola's remarks
to U.S. Coral Reef Task
Force* pg. 7

Next week's issue:

- *More on U.S.
Coral Reef Task
Force Meeting
plus pics.*
- *Lt. Gov's. House
update*
- *Historical Notes*

*For additional
news, information
and much, much
more about your
government,
visit the
ASG Website
at [http://www.
americansamoa
.gov/](http://www.americansamoa.gov/)*

Governor Togiola submits Proposed Final FY2008 Budget to the Fono

(UTULEI) - Governor Togiola Tulafono has submitted to the Fono the Proposed Final Budget of the American Samoa Government (ASG) for fiscal year 2008 for Legislative review and to provide for its appropriation.

In a letter to the Senate President and Speaker of the House, dated August 24, 2007, before traveling to Honolulu for meetings, Governor Togiola said the plan reflects a careful and cautious revenue projection that is consistent with the actual revenues realized from the most recent trends.

"Revenue trends have remained relatively static over the past few years underscoring the fact that no new revenue measures have been enacted to increase our revenue base," said Gov. Togiola. "These scarce resources were carefully allocated to ensure current service levels continue in the coming fiscal year.

Governor Togiola told the Fono leadership that any improvements in services will have to come from increased performance efficiency and effectiveness rather than from new funds; a fact that certainly highlights ASG's persistent commitment to controlling unnecessary spending and executing cost control measures throughout the new fiscal year.

Proposed Final Budget of the American Samoa Government FY2008

- Local revenues are projected at \$64.5 million.
- The Department of Interior grant in aid is at \$22.77 million as that revenue stream continues to decline from a high of \$23 million just a few years back.
- The total authorized by the United States Congress for Capital Improvement projects funding is \$10.43 million.
- Federal grants supporting government operations are estimated at \$98.87 million.
- Our Enterprise Funds are projecting a total of \$107.8 million in local revenues and expenses excluding subsidies and Federal grants.
- In sum, a total of \$304.37 million is proposed in revenues and expenditures for government operations and enterprises in fiscal year 2008 or an increase of about 6.2% from fiscal year 2007.
- Federal grants and Enterprise funds account for the most increases from the previous fiscal year.
- Federal grants are estimated to increase by \$10.1 million or 11% while Enterprise funds are projecting a growth \$7.6 million or 7.6% over the previous fiscal year.
- Local revenues and expenditures are projected at the same level as in fiscal year 2007.

"Although the future of the tuna canning industry is uncertain as it is buffeted by the impacts of rising minimum wages and escalating fuel costs, there is a glimmer of hope that their operations will continue into the near future as evidenced by the recent signing of a Power Purchase Agreement between Chicken of the Sea and the American Samoa Power Authority," said Gov. Togiola.

(Continued on page 8)

Lee Auditorium reopens after multi-million-dollar facelift



First Lady Maryann Tulafono was given the honor of cutting the ribbon to officially reopen the newly renovated H. Rex Lee Auditorium.

[photo: americansamoa.gov]

Many local residents have often wondered where the Lee Auditorium, commonly known as the Fale Laumei, got its name. And now, thanks to the recent multi-million-dollar renovation to the building, everyone that passes by the structure will get a glimpse of the new sign posted on the main entrance that reads: "Governor H. Rex Lee Auditorium."

Hyrum Rex Lee served as Governor of American Samoa from May 24, 1961 to July 31, 1967, and then again from May 28, 1977 until January 3, 1978. A Democrat, Lee served as an FCC commissioner from 1968-1973. He passed away on July 26, 2001.

According to Governor Togiola Tulafono, it was Governor Lee's work that gave the territory a television station, an airport, the Lee Auditorium, and a hospital.

Over the past years, the Lee Auditorium has served as a common venue for hosting different events and gatherings. And after feeling the wrath of nearly a handful of major hurricanes and tropical cyclones over the past two decades, the building had deteriorated and showed signs of wear and tear.

Renovation work kicked off last year on August 7 and the work was completed nearly a year later, on August 1. On Thursday, August 16, Department of Public Works director Taeaotui Punafo Tilei issued the Certificate of Occupancy for the building to Department of Commerce director Faleseu Eliu Paopao, whose department administered the bulk of the \$3,174,000 expended on the project. Funding for the project came from two different sources: the Community Block Development Grant from the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program, and the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funds administered by the Department of Interior (DOI). DOC deputy director Lelei Peau is credited with securing the funding sources that made the project possible. The new structure features modern upgrades like a central air conditioning system, state of the art lighting and sound system, newer bathrooms, a kitchen, and conference rooms. The first event held at the newly renovated Lee Auditorium was the 18th U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting which was hosted locally earlier this week. The renovated building will be the highlight next year, when the territory hosts the long awaited 2008 Pacific Festival. The renovation work was carried out by Fletcher Construction, while the design work was done by Joe Wielenman of Wielenman and Associates.



A look at the newly renovated Governor H. Rex Lee Auditorium, commonly known as the Fale Laumei. The renovation work cost more than \$3 million and upgrades include a state of the art lighting and sound system, in addition to central air conditioning, bathrooms, and new electrical wiring. [photo: americansamoa.gov]

Acting Governor Ipulasi Aitofele Sunia issues statement on Uiagalelei Iona's federal case

(UTULEI) – Acting Governor Ipulasi Aitofele Sunia today issued the following statement regarding the federal court case of Mr. Uiagalelei Iona, Acting Chief Property Management Officer.

STATEMENT: The Office of the Governor has not been formally informed on the federal case in Honolulu against Mr. Uiagalelei Iona, who currently serves as Acting Chief Property Management Officer. We have learned through media inquiries and therefore, the American Samoa Government offers this statement.

At this time, we are not able to comment upon this matter that is pending before the court. It is a basic principle in the American system of justice that "a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty."

As Acting Chief Property Management Officer, Mr. Uiagalelei had requested a leave of absence from his post effective August 22, 2007 for personal reasons.

On August 21, 2007, Governor Togiola Tulafono issued a General Memorandum to delegate the authority of Acting Chief Property Management Officer to Mr. Ino Vitale until the return of Mr. Uiagalelei to work.

The allegations against Mr. Uiagalelei are serious. And we must allow the judicial process to run its course.

DHSS Director hopeful that "high risk" status for WIC/ASNAP will be lifted

Since the federal government placed a "high risk" status label on the WIC and Food Stamp (American Samoa Nutritional Assistance Program or ASNAP) programs administered locally under the Department of Human and Social Services in 2005, DHSS director Talia Fa'afetai Taulualo has been busy attending several meetings with representatives from Region IX, which oversees local DHSS operations, hoping that the "high risk" status will be lifted sooner than later.

"Our main goal now is to comply with the requirements that have been laid out," Talia said, adding that his department has done a great job in combating the fraudulent use of the WIC/Food Stamp programs which are federally funded annually with an estimated \$11 million combined.

The "high risk" status was issued in 2005 and finalized in 2006. Since that time, almost 50% of local vendors participating in the two programs have been disqualified by DHSS for different reasons.

Vendors cannot participate in one program and not the other. Basically, the vendor must participate in both programs (WIC and Food Stamp). If they are disqualified from either of the programs, they automatically lose eligibility for the other program.

It is the DHSS Quality Control Division, specifically the Compliance Unit, which is responsible for looking into possible cases of fraud in the two programs. When WIC vouchers and/or food stamps are redeemed for cash at the bank, sometimes suspicions are raised because of the high redemption value. Some stores reportedly make off with over \$50,000 worth of WIC and food stamp purchases in a single month, although these same stores are small in size and don't appear to have that much inventory in stock.

It is those questionable transactions that trigger concerns from the WIC or Food Stamp office, concerns that are then referred to the Compliance Unit for further investigation.

The Compliance Unit works off a point system. For every violation, points are taken away from the vendor until such a time when the vendor gets disqualified from the program.

Compliance Unit acting manager Emelio Fruean, accompanied by three other officers who make up the Compliance Unit, usually visit targeted stores in an attempt to determine if they are abusing the WIC/Food Stamp programs.

The officers take with them WIC vouchers and Food Stamps issued in their names. While at the store, the guys attempt to sneak into their purchase, illegal items like cigarettes and beer, to be bought with the checks. If the transaction goes through, a report is drawn up and forwarded to either the WIC or Food Stamp office, whichever program was used in the transaction.

It is the respective offices that ultimately have the final say as to what, if anything, should be done to the vendor. All the items purchased during the Compliance Unit's "buys" are later donated to the DHSS shelter or the Nazareth House at Fatu-o-Aiga.

Items that are not to be sold or bought using Food Stamps include anything that cannot be consumed. This means that any product a person can eat or drink can be bought, while other items including cleaning supplies, toys, and personal hygiene products like toothpaste and soap cannot be purchased with Food Stamps.

For the WIC program, each check comes with a standard list of everything that can be bought with the check, no substitutions allowed. Items that can be bought with WIC checks are listed on the green cardboard pamphlet that accompanies all issued WIC checks, as well as on the checks themselves.

(Continued on page 4)

| AMERICAN SAMOA WIC PROGRAM - AUTHORIZED FOOD LIST (Rev. 10/06) | | |
|---|--|---|
| INFANT FORMULA Enfamil, ProSobee, Special Infant Formula | 120% of the DV for Vitamin C per 8 oz. serving) Grape Juice: Welch Pineapple Juice: Del Monte, Libby, Townhouse, Western Family | CARROTS (plain, fresh, frozen or canned - 1lb) No Mixed Vegetables or Added Sauces or Butter |
| INFANT CEREAL (8 or 16 oz. - shall be dry without fruit) Mixed, Rice | Apple Juice: Bel-Air, Janet Lee, Welch, Western Family | LEGUMES (beans/peas) Any type, 1 lb. bulk or prepackaged (not more than 16 oz.) |
| INFANT JUICE (4.0 oz. or 4.2 oz. glass bottles) Only Brands: Gerber, Beech-Nut, Heinz No Organic Juices or Yogurt Juices | Tomato Juice: Del Monte, Hunts No Juice in Jars or Cartons, Freshly Squeezed or Sweetened fruit Flavored Drinks/Nectars Allowed | Mung Chick peas Split peas Red Garbanzo Blackeyed peas Kidney Lima Soybean Navy Lentils Pinto No Fresh, Frozen or Canned Beans or Peas |
| MILK (Whole, Lowfat, 1% or 2%, Skim) Canned Evaporated Milk Dry Milk UHT Brands: Real Fresh Paul's Meadow Fresh Weight Watchers & Kraft Natural Lights: Anchor No Buttermilk, Chocolate or Goat's | CEREAL (16 oz. and up only - iron fortified and low in sugar, any combination of hot or cold cereals. 36 oz. or less) Cherrios (Multi-Grain and plain only) Corn, Rice or Wheat Chex (Ralston) Grape Nuts Flakes Kellogg's Bran Flakes Kellogg's Corn Flakes Life (plain) Product 19 Total (Whole Grain) Townhouse Toasted Oats Kaboom Rice Krispies Hot Cereals Quaker Instant Oatmeal (plain) Cream of Wheat (plain) Malt-O-Meal Maypo - 30-sec. Oatmeal | PEANUT BUTTER Available in 16 or 18 oz. jar - Any brand: plain, creamy or chunky No Jars, Jelly or Honey Added, No Honey Roasted Peanut Butter Spread |
| CHEESE - Pasteurized/Domestic (8 oz. or 16 oz.) Sliced or Block (weight up to 1 lb. or 16 oz.) Only Types (Anchor & Mainland Brands Included): Weight Watchers & Kraft Natural Lights: Cheddar Colby Monterey Jack Provolone Swiss Muenster Brick Mozzarella (part-skim & whole) Longhorn Processed American No Grated or Individually-Wrapped Slices | | TUNA (5 1/8 oz. or 6 1/2 can) Any brand: chunk, light, water or oil packed No Albacore Tuna, No Special Diet Tuna Crackers Snack Combinations |
| EGGS (small size only) White or Brown No Fertile Eggs Allowed No Labeled Eggs for Special Diets Allowed | | |

The green cardboard that accompanies all issued WIC checks specifically notes the items that can be purchased with the checks. Substituting the listed products with other items or exchanging them for cash is

"High Risk" status for WIC/ASNAP (continued from page 3)

Examples of items that can be purchased include milk, cereal, eggs, juice, formula, and peanut butter.

Only certain brands and sizes are permitted to be bought and each vendor is urged to comply with the rules already set forth.

According to Talia, the Quality Control Division is one section of his department that he has placed emphasis on, in assisting with the current "high risk" status, as they are the ones who inspect the stores and "they have been doing a better job at it than before."

Talia recently attended a meeting in San Francisco to discuss the program reviews conducted here in May and July for the WIC and Food Stamp programs.

"The meetings were basically to reassess the status of the programs," Talia said. "The Region is looking into our status right now but there hasn't been any confirmation as to what they are going to do. However, they were very pleased with the review on the ASNAP program."

He added, "Hopefully they will issue a decision before the end of this year or even next year. All we have to do is keep up with their conditions for administering the program."

Talia has expressed concern that the Region has not been specific with their demands, meaning that they have not imposed a timeline on when things need to be straightened out.

"There is no set milestone," he said. "It is an open ended thing and there are no specifics on what they want us to follow." Talia said he expressed this concern to Region IX, whom he described as being "sensitive" to the issue.

"Our main goal now is to follow all the requirements for both programs. For those vendors who have been disqualified, there is a maximum of three years imposed, after which they can reapply but in cases like that, we would seriously need to consider all the facts, including the vendor's history of following program guidelines," Talia concluded.



Governor Togiola Tulafono, after serving as acting president for the last three years, is the newly elected president of the Pacific Basin Development Council. He is pictured with Mr. George Bamba, Chief of Staff for Gov. Felix Camacho of Guam, at the PBDC summer meeting on August 27 – 28 held at Lana'i, Hawai'i.
[photo: americansamoa.gov]

Gov. Togiola at PBDC meeting is briefed on military build up in Guam

(HONOLULU) – After serving as acting president of the Pacific Basin Development Council (PBDC) for the last three years, Governor Togiola Tulafono was elected by the PBDC Board as president on August 28th at the annual summer meeting that was held in Lana'i, Hawaii.

At the meeting, two important seminars were conducted that also included a briefing on the military buildup in Guam.

The first seminar on Monday, August 27th included issues on climate change and its effect on the island territories, while the other was a follow up on Homeland Security workshops that were held at previous years.

A Guam representative at the meeting presented a report on the military buildup in Guam, and issues that may affect the territories, including American Samoa.

"I had indicated my concern that high wages created by the construction work and new jobs to support the military move may affect our territories, and the military must include us in their financial assistance planning to fill the void that will be created when our people will be relocated to Guam to take up these jobs," said Governor Togiola.

Governor Togiola has previously expressed his concern regarding such major project as a similar situation occurred more than two decades ago.

"I am extremely concerned with this problem because it happened before with private industry development in the 1980s and it can happen again," said Governor Togiola.

PBDC resolved to meet again at the Department of Interior Business Development Conference at Guam in October to continue the dialogue with the military on the Guam military buildup issues.

A full compliment of the military will be present during that conference to brief the territorial governors on this issue. Governor Togiola will return to American Samoa on September 9th.

Toys affected by worldwide recall found in the Territory

Some of the toys that are listed under the worldwide recall of toys believed to contain high levels of lead have been discovered in the territory. Last month, the owner of a small store in the eastern district pulled an Elmo figure off the shelf after she learned that the plastic figurine was one of the toys affected by the recall. Last week, another recalled toy was presented before members of the newly formed Department of Health Task Force during a meeting. Pictures of the toy were recorded and later televised. Two days ago, a young mother of three discovered that three of the toys in her toddler's play box were all affected by the recall. The toys included an Elmo boom box, a talking Diego field journal, and a plastic Dora the Explorer figurine. The toys were brought here from the US mainland in a care package from a relative.

The current recalls for toys containing lead are being lodged by giant toy manufacturers and distributors Mattel Inc. and Fisher-Price, for toys representing popular Sesame Street and Nickelodeon characters like Dora the Explorer, Elmo, Diego, Cookie Monster, Big Bird, etc.

Lead is toxic if ingested. It contains a potent nerve toxin that can affect the brain causing lower IQ, poor memory and attention, decreased motor skills and self control, and increased aggression.

Other popular character inspired toys being recalled for containing small ingestible magnets include Batman, Polly Pocket, Barbie, Doggie Daycare, and Shonen Jump's One Piece.

Ingestion of the magnets has resulted in one death and 19 surgical procedures in the United States since the recall was launched last year.

Chairman of the DOH Task Force Dr. Ivan Tuliau said that because toys included in the recall have been located here, one of their goals now is to get pictures out to the public, "to raise awareness and let people know what to look for."

He added, "We also want to get photos of the recalled toys out to all the different stores to let them know which toys need to be removed from their inventory."

Tuliau said that the current recall is voluntary, not mandatory. Therefore, they will not immediately go into the stores and confiscate the items but instead, store owners will be given a deadline of when to remove all the recalled items from their shelves before members of the DOH Task Force stop in for inspection purposes.

"There is a lot of money involved here," Tuliau said. "The priority now is to get all the recalled items off store shelves. Afterwards, all the local vendors and consumers will be able to send the toys back to the manufacturer for a monetary voucher."

According to the Fisher Price recall web site, monetary vouchers range anywhere from \$1 to \$76, depending on the toy.



Pictured here are some of the toys that are affected by the current worldwide recall. Some of these same toys have been found in the territory. Over 1 million toys have been recalled by Mattel Inc. and Fisher Price for high levels of lead and magnets small enough to be swallowed by young children.



Dr. Eileen Yandall and dental assistant Valoaga Fuamatu-Tunoa were part of a team that examined a total of 72 patients, mostly young children in Ofu, Manu'a earlier this month.

Manu'a kids get free dental checkups, thanks to SCHIP program

Earlier this month, a delegation of local dental professionals led by dentists Dr. Leute Lopa-Leota and Dr. Eileen Yandall traveled to the Manu'a Islands to offer free dental checkups for the residents there. The service was made possible through the local Department of Health and federal funding from the School Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) which falls under Medicaid. "We would have stayed longer but we had limitations, including the bad weather conditions," Dr. Lopa-Leota explained.

Other limitations included the lack of a vehicle for the Ta'u Dispensary to transport the travelers and their equipment from the airport to the clinic, which is quite a distance. In addition, because the Ta'u Dispensary is currently undergoing major reconstruction work, the dental services were conducted in a Samoan fale belonging to one of the nurses stationed there. "Besides those little bumps, everything went okay," Dr. Lopa-Leota remarked.

The traveling entourage conducted sessions on oral health education and performed fillings, examinations, and extractions. Patients who didn't get the chance to be seen have been listed as referrals.

The group spent three days in Ta'u with 56 patients and two days in Ofu where a total of 72 patients received services. The majority of the patients that were treated in Ofu were young children as the clinic was held inside the school campus. Overall, during the visits, the patient composition included a mixture of males and females representing different age groups.

The traveling dental team is grateful to the government owned Segaula aircraft and its pilot, Captain Joseph Misaalefua, for making their trip possible.

In addition to Lopa-Leota and Yandall, others who were on the trip included dental assistants Angie Bird-Loa, Valoaga Fuamatu-Tunoa, and Elvina Timoteo-Malamala.

The group, which served the dental clinic at the LBJ Medical Center, has been transferred to the Department of Health and now travel as a DOH team, treating both children and adults.



Dr. Eileen Yandall, Angie Loa, DOH nurse practitioner Tele Frost Hill, Dr. Leute Lope-Leota, and Valoaga Fuamatu-Tunoa traveled to the Manu'a Islands earlier this month to offer free medical and dental services for the residents there.

Governor Togiola declares war on global warming, orders reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

(UTULEI) – Governor Togiola Tulafono, in his remarks today at the 18th Meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force being held at H. Rex Lee Auditorium (Fale Laumei) in Utulei said to address the effects of global warming the Territory must reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and the American Samoa Government (ASG) recognizes that it can make a difference by setting an example.

"In declaring American Samoa's war on global warming, I have issued an Executive Order, which will result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions produced by ASG," said Gov. Togiola.

Gov. Togiola said the Executive Order will requiring ASG vehicles to have a minimum fuel efficiency rating of 20 MPG, as well as to start purchasing hybrid vehicles at a rate of 5% and increasing to 50% by model year 2017.

Executive Order No. 010-2007 will "prohibit the importation of vehicles more than 10 years old, and replace incandescent light bulbs with compact florescent bulbs. It will also require ASG appliance and electronic purchases to have an USEPA Energy Star approval and prohibit the importation of high phosphorous detergents, effective October 1, 2007.

"The American Samoa Government is committed to do its share to address the adverse impacts of global warming and resulting climate change, and we challenge the federal government, the public sector and regional jurisdictions to join the fight," said Gov. Togiola.

(Note: See page 7 for entire text of Gov. Togiola's remarks at the U. S. Coral Reef Task Force meeting.)

Governor Togiola Tulafono's Remarks to 18th Meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force

Pago Pago, American Samoa
August 23, 2007 – H. Rex Lee Auditorium

Talofa lava and afio mai!

I want to extend our warm welcome to all of you to American Samoa by saying "Talofa!" "E le aumaua aso fa'apenei" - in our mother tongue, the literal translation of what I just said is: "Days like today are hard to find."

It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome you all to American Samoa for the 18th meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. Since our last meeting, not so long ago in Washington, D.C., we have made some progress, but we still have a long way to go. Maintaining this dialogue is an important way to ensure persistent forward progress.

As you have heard about many of the Territory's accomplishments throughout the past week, I will keep my remarks brief today, focusing on issues of critical concern to American Samoa.

To address the effects of global warming we must reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and the American Samoa Government (ASG) recognizes that it can make a difference by setting an example. In declaring American Samoa's war on global warming, I have issued an Executive Order, which will result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions produced by ASG. My Executive Order covers the following:

- Requiring ASG vehicles have a minimum fuel efficiency rating of 20 MPG.
- Begin purchasing hybrid vehicles rate of 5% increasing to 50% by model year 2017.
- Prohibit the importation of vehicles more than 10 years old.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact florescent bulbs.
- ASG appliance and electronic purchases will have an USEPA Energy Star approval.
- Prohibit the importation of high phosphorous detergents, effective October 1, 2007.

The American Samoa Government is committed to do its share to address the adverse impacts of global warming and resulting climate change, and challenges the federal government, the public sector and regional jurisdictions to join the fight.

I am pleased to inform you that our territorial MPA Network strategy has been finalized and adopted. The Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network Strategy was developed to link American Samoa's MPA programs and agencies together to be more effective in protecting and managing the marine resources and aims to develop regional partnerships to better protect our coral reef ecosystem.

The strategy works through utilizing each program's mandates, resources and funding through enhanced coordination and integration of education, research and monitoring, enforcement, and program administration. The goal of the MPA Network Strategy is to effectively coordinate existing and future MPAs to ensure the long-term health and sustainable use of the Territory's coral reef resources.

Every year, I meet with the Prime Minister of Independent Samoa to discuss important cross border issues. Starting this year, I intend to put coral reefs on the agenda in order to foster better regional coordination of coral reef conservation. Working together with the government and the people of Independent Samoa, I would like to develop a regional coral reef conservation initiative in order to achieve common goals and address shared concerns.

As we proceed with our work conserving and managing coral reefs, we must learn from all of our partners from the Caribbean to the Pacific. As such, I am requesting additional stakeholder representation on the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program review panel to include:

- a. The All Islands Coral Reef Secretariat Chair,
- b. A representative from the Caribbean and Pacific jurisdictions, and
- c. An International stakeholder

From July 20 through August 2 of 2008, American Samoa will be hosting the 10th Festival of Pacific Arts, a celebration every four years of the arts and culture of the Pacific region. Since 1972, delegations from 27 Pacific Island Countries and Territories have come together to share and exchange their cultures with a focus on traditional song and dance. In light of the fact that 2008 is also the International Year of the Reef, I would like to propose a Pacific-wide traditional song and dance competition focusing on coral reef conservation and traditional uses of coral reefs throughout the Pacific.

I have received the 2002-2006 draft Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring Report for American Samoa from the Coral Reef Ecosystem Division Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. We are grateful to Dr. Rusty Brainard and his team in completing the research and delivering this key resource management tool to us. My Coral Reef Advisory Group is reviewing the report and I believe the report will serve as a valuable tool to assist local management efforts in the conservation and management of our coral reefs. *(Continued on page 8)*

Governor Togiola Tulafono's Remarks *(continued from page 7)*

Coordinating and implementing rapid response to unplanned impacts to coral reefs is an unresolved issue which has been raised by the States and Territories over the years and formally in a resolution adopted in Puerto Rico at the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meeting in October of 2002. This concern stems from impacts associated with ship groundings, improper anchoring, natural disasters and unplanned impacts from permitted activities. The mechanisms to facilitate rapid response to such events remain at risk. The State and Territorial coral jurisdictions recognize that proposed language in the reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Act empowers Department of the Interior and NOAA to have authority to respond to such events. In an effort to ensure a proactive approach to this issue, the AIC proposes the following actions:

1. Address the need to establish a fund within a federal agency that can be activated quickly and effectively at the request of a coral jurisdiction to support the intent of the Act to facilitate rapid response. It would seem appropriate and necessary that this fund would be created by the reauthorization.
2. Define the scope of the planning efforts and actions necessary to be completed, and to be prepared to activate a well-coordinated, rapid response. This task should include identifying the agencies and individuals needed to build the strategies and a timeline to complete the effort.
3. Define a clear and simple process for rapid response activation in the event of a coral injury event.
4. Report these products back to the USCRTF at the Spring 2008 meeting.

The Coral Reef Conservation Act works to protect and manage coral reefs. One of the biggest challenges we face is ensuring that all resource agencies support our efforts and work in concert with us. Many of our federal partners have developed implementation plans to address "impacts" to coral reefs. These plans assess the agency's regulatory frameworks and consider potential changes to statutes to best protect coral reefs. I would like to challenge USEPA and US Army Corps of Engineers to review and assess their mandates and statutes to provide more directed and stronger support to local partners in addressing their mandates to conserve and protect coral reefs.

As we look to the future, the local action strategies that guide our coral reef conservation and management efforts will be further developed and refined to meet the growing needs of our islands. With the assistance of Gerry Davis and Flinn Curren, Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG) has adopted a new organizational structure that will guide us through the process of revising our local action strategies. The key partners in CRAG will lead a local action strategy-working group. I am confident that this new structure will invigorate CRAG and empower our local environmental leaders to combat the threats facing our coral reefs.

Thank you very much for your attention and I hope you enjoy the rest of your stay in American Samoa. Fa'afetai tele lava.

Proposed Final FY2008 Budget *(continued from page 1)*

"Star Kist, on the other hand, is anticipating launching the production of the tuna pouch. These events will continue to drive economic activity within the Territory in the next few years."

On the economic front, Governor Togiola said ASG continues to investigate new avenues to diversify its economy. He said one of the key initiatives that will contribute to this effort is terminating the fiber optic land line in the Territory within the next year.

"This will certainly boost communication related business and allow the Territory to take advantage of new technologies and create an environment for new employment of our people," said Gov. Togiola. "We will continue to pursue improvements to our financial management capabilities as well as better management of the federal grant programs within government."

Governor Togiola said the increase in federal funds for the new fiscal year provides for increased training in grant writing and improve overall grant compliance. He said this effort has begun with the recent grant workshops in San Francisco, which was attended by all the key financial agencies of our local and federal government. The stated intent of that workshop was to increase ASG's compliance with the Office of Management and Budget circulars governing the use of federal funds.

"We approach the future with confidence by placing our aspirations and hopes not just on economic activity and our cherished social and political stability but on our Constitutional foundation of "Muamua le Atua," (Let God Be First) said Gov. Togiola. "Ultimately, we entrust our future in the hands of the Almighty as called for by our Constitution and by the faith of our people."

As in the past, Governor Togiola said all the directors of the executive departments and agencies are available for questions and inquiries during the Fono deliberations and review of the budget proposal.

Hearings are scheduled at the Fono after the Labor Day holiday on Tuesday.